DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 474 411 IR 021 970

AUTHOR	Harr, Gary Lynn
TITLE	Connections: A Comprehensive Student Portal. Concept Paper and Proposal.
PUB DATE	2002-12-00
NOTE	40p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	College Students; Computer Mediated Communication; *Computer System Design; Computer Uses in Education; Distance Education; *Educational Resources; Higher Education; Information Networks; Information Services; *Information Systems; *Technological Advancement; *World Wide Web
IDENTIFIERS	*Campus Portals; *Florida Community College at Jacksonville; Portal Sites

ABSTRACT

A student Web portal is a personalized, student-centric view of College Web resources. The "Artemis" system at Florida Community College at Jacksonville (FCCJ), represents movement toward realization of the efficiencies and student service possibilities of a Web portal. This proposal recommends a radical expansion of Artemis functions, one that has the potential to: integrate disparate information resources at the College; increase student retention, particularly during the critical first term; increase student satisfaction on measures of institutional effectiveness;increase student access to services and provide enhanced support for distance learners; increase operational efficiency through students' use of self-help resources; and revitalize student success services. Realization of these outcomes will require a major institutional commitment--comparable to that devoted to other significant College achievements--and ongoing development and support. It will require a reallocation of resources and consideration of reorganization to support emerging functions. This proposal suggests what can be done and how to get started. Discussion includes theoretical foundations; design considerations including student, marketing, integration and project management factors; design overview; portal elements; and issues and concerns including infrastructure and project feasibility and issues and staff commitment and organizational support. Implementation suggestions and a bibliography are appended. (AEF)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

IN IRTR 0029

ED 474 411

FLORIDA COMMUNITY COLLEGE at Jacksonville
ARTEMIS

Connections

A Comprehensive Student Portal Concept Paper and Proposal

Gary Lynn Harr, Ph.D.
12-16-02

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

G. Harr

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

IR021970

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

FLORIDA COMMUNITY COLLEGE at Jacksonville
ARTEMIS

Connections Student Portal

Executive Summary

Wired to What?
Florida Community College at Jacksonville is recognized as one of the foremost "wired colleges" in the nation. This is a notable achievement by any standard. But once one has time to reflect on this accomplishment, the next question that naturally comes to mind is: "Wired to what?"

Having the technical infrastructure is a necessary but not sufficient condition for achieving excellence in providing electronic tools for student use. It has been said "Information technology is 90 percent information and 10 percent technology." *Content*, provided in a personal, relevant, timely, easy-to-use, and comprehensive framework is the other piece of what we need in our efforts to use information technology to better serve students.

A Web *portal* is the way to do it. Most simply put, a student Web portal is a personalized, *student-centric* view of College Web resources. (A much fuller description will be provided in the Introduction section.)

Why Do It?
Artemis already provides the foundation for such a portal. This proposal recommends a radical expansion of *Artemis* functions, one that has the potential to:

- Integrate disparate information resources at the College
- Increase student retention, particularly during the critical first term
- Increase student satisfaction on measures of institutional effectiveness
- Increase student access to services and provide enhanced support for distance learners
- Increase operational efficiency through students' use of self-help resources
- Revitalize student success services

What It Takes
Realization of these outcomes will require a major institutional commitment-- comparable to that devoted to other significant College achievements-and ongoing development and support. It will require a reallocation of resources and consideration of reorganization to support emerging functions.

This proposal suggests what can be done and how we might get started.

FLORIDA COMMUNITY COLLEGE
ARTEMIS

Connections Student Portal

Contents

Introduction **Page 4**
Some Characteristics of a Portal
Existing Resources
The Outcomes

Theoretical Foundations **Page 7**
Tinto's Theory of Attrition
Challenge and Support
Summary

Design Considerations **Page 11**
Student Factors
Marketing Factors
Integration Factors
Programming Factors
Project Management Factors

Design Overview **Page 16**

Portal Elements **Page 17**

Issues and Concerns **Page 34**
Infrastructure and Project Feasibility
Staff Commitment and Organizational Support

Conclusion **Page 36**

Appendix A : Implementation Suggestions **Page 37**
Concept Development and Approval
Initial Organization and Planning
Project Development
Programming
Implementation
Recycling

Appendix B: Bibliography **Page 39**

FLORIDA COMMUNITY COLLEGE at Jacksonville
ARTEMIS

Connections Student Portal

Introduction

Most simply put, a student portal is a *personalized,* student-centric view of College Web resources. It is an idea that many institutions are pursuing at top speed.

In the August 9, 2002 issue of the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Florence Olsen writes about "The Power of Portals." She reports: "In a recent survey by Edu-cause, the education-technology consortium, institutional portals ranked fourth among the top-10 technology issues that college administrators expected would gain importance in the next 12 months."

FCCJ has recognized the potentials inherent in Web-based services. It has implemented significant elements of a Web presence. It has created the *Artemis* system, which represents movement toward realization of the efficiencies and student service possibilities of a Web portal. It is now poised to dedicate itself to the next step of this development.

The ideas in this proposal are not original; they are simply pulled together in a way that (hopefully) suggests some future directions and the process required for that development. Special recognition is due Valencia Community College (and Dr. Joyce Romano) for their development of the *Atlas* portal-a model that has heavily influenced this proposal.

Because a portal is different in some significant ways from a typical website, we will begin by describing a mix of characteristics that makes portals unique.

Some Characteristics of a Portal

Security

- Single sign-on, secure access to a wide range of information tools
- Security profile parameters

Content

- Standardized, intuitive user interface
- Dynamic content
- Personalized information based on student needs and characteristics
- Productivity tools
- Channels of information from internal and external sources
- Information push
- Information pull (student-influenced portal editor)
- Transactional access to significant College functions

Interaction

- Email
- Voice mail
- Classmate access
- Bulletin boards
- Chat rooms
- Student interest groups (SIGs)
- Electronic polling
- Multimedia (audio and video options)

Knowledge Management

- Integration of information from various sources
- Course management links
- Student information system links
- Sense-and-respond capabilities
- Search engine
- E-forms data collection and routing

As can be seen, a quality portal is a dynamic information tool. It is not something that can be developed and then left to work on its own. It requires a major commitment to ongoing development and maintenance to provide timely and personally relevant information to students.

Existing Resources

The College already provides many useful information tools for student use. It has also begun to amass the staffing and other resources required to support the further development and ongoing maintenance of such resources, including:

- Free student access to the Web through dial-up connections
- Capability of generating individual student email accounts
- Online access to many College resources
- Significant access to College transactions through *Artemis*, including: transcripts, registration, payment, financial aid, grade reporting, instructor and personal schedules, degree audit profile maintenance and personal information update, and an array of management functions
- Course management tools (i.e., Blackboard and Web CT)
- Online application processing
- Online new student orientation
- Online Career Development Center (CDC) resources
- E-Systems team
- College Webmaster
- Many student success staff who are already computer savvy
- Opportunities to reorganize student success services to make more effective use of staff talents and information technology tools

The development of a more comprehensive student portal provides the opportunity to better *integrate* these existing tools and to develop new capabilities aimed at enhancing student success.

The Outcomes

This proposal will focus on possible content and structure of a student portal. Providing an expanded array of services in portal form has the potential to increase the reach and efficiency of our services and positively impact student success.

Implementation of a state-of-the-art Web portal will result in:

- Integration of disparate information resources at the College
- Increased student retention, particularly during the critical first term
- Increased student satisfaction on measures of institutional effectiveness
- Increased student access to services and enhanced support for distance learners
- Increased operational efficiency through students' use of self-help resources
- Revitalization of student success services

In order to ensure student retention and satisfaction outcomes, the portal design should be based on theory and research related to student retention and success.

FLORIDA COMMUNITY COLLEGE at Jacksonville
ARTEMIS

Connections Student Portal

Theoretical Foundation

If the student portal is going to have a real impact on student success, it must do more than simply provide information access to students. It must provide information in a way that supports what we know to be important factors related to student success.

Two fundamental references were used to guide the design of *Connections*:

- Tinto's research on student attrition and
- the developmental principle of balancing challenge and support.

Tinto's Theory of Attrition
Vincent Tinto's theory, based on extensive research and summarized in his book, *Leaving College*, suggests that there are certain key factors that impact a student's chance of educational success.

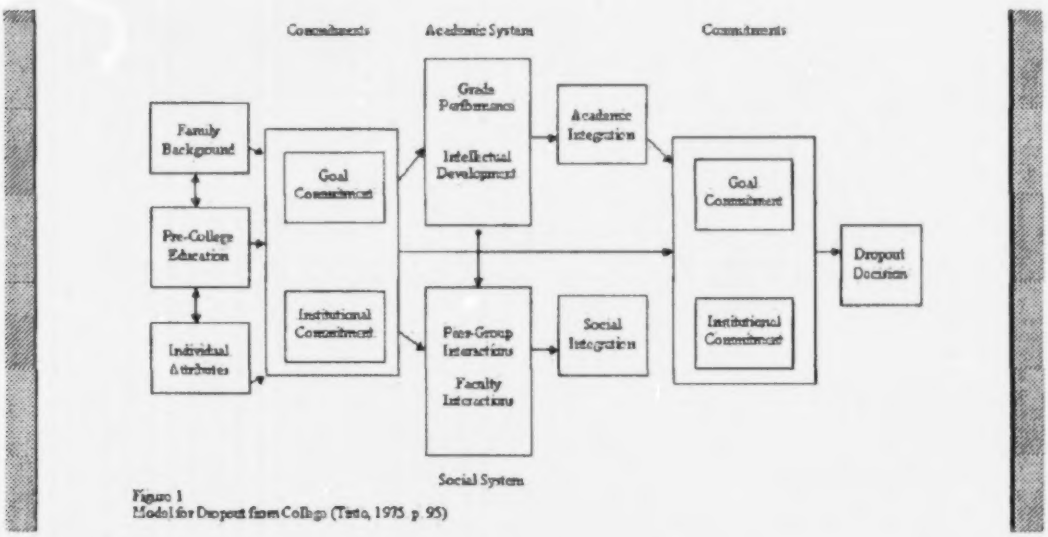

Figure 1
Model for Dropout from College (Tinto, 1975, p. 95)

Some factors, such as the student's background and individual attributes, are not within the circle of institutional influence; others, however, may be directly or indirectly influenced by institutional policies, practices, and system design.

The primary student success factors we need to take into consideration are summarized below.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

- Goal Commitment
  Most students who walk in our doors do not have clearly formulated academic, career, and personal goals. Even those who say they do, often change these goals once exposed to the maelstrom of the college experience. To the extent we can help students clarify their goals and make realistic and meaningful commitments based on clear goals, they will be more motivated, focused in their actions and decisions, and therefore more successful.

- Institutional Commitment
  Students are more likely to remain enrolled and persist in their studies at FCCJ if they are satisfied with the services they receive and if they feel they are making progress towards the goals they set for themselves. Anything that makes services more effective, efficient, responsive, and accessible will contribute to student success. But even more important is the degree to which students feel a part of the academic and social fabric of the College.

- Academic Integration
  Students' first term-even the first few weeks of their first term-is a critical period. It is during this time that a student is challenged by the academic rigors of college in an unfamiliar environment. Students who come to believe they can master college-level academic work and who make some kind of meaningful connection with their professors, counselors, and other staff, have crossed the first hurdle to success. Students who experience failure, self-doubt, and alienation will leave.

- Social Integration
  Some have argued that social integration is not as important for community college students as it is for traditional residential college students. This is supported by the reality that FCCJ students' social support systems are often external to the campus. This does not, however, reduce the importance of offering a sense of community to our students. To the extent that they become involved in the college community and to the extent they can informally and positively interact with college staff and their peers-they will increase the chances of their success.

Challenge and Support

Within the college community, learning takes many forms. Academic experience coalesces with personal and social development in somewhat predictable ways. In *Education and Identity*, Arthur Chickering identifies seven key vectors of student development. These vectors will inform the design of the more developmental aspects of the portal (e.g., the *My Goals* element):

- Developing competence
- Managing emotions
- Developing autonomy
- Establishing identity
- Freeing interpersonal relationships
- Developing purpose
- Developing integrity

As students cope with these learning issues, a dynamic balance between *challenge* and *support* underlies their endeavors. Three circumstances illustrate the consequences of variable balances between these factors.

- If the learning situation is too challenging, or is without adequate and appropriate support, the student becomes overwhelmed, anxious, or frustrated.

- If the learning situation is not challenging enough or if support is too readily available, the student becomes complacent, bored, or dependent.

- If a proper balance between challenge and support is maintained-something that must be individually gauged and varied in accordance with personal and task characteristics-the student learns and continues to develop.

For new college students, this process should be viewed as a dynamic one that generally begins with high levels of support when the initial challenges of starting college are greatest and then encourages greater autonomy as students become better integrated into the community of learning. To the extent possible, individual variations in this balance should be accommodated as necessary.

Our task, as student development educators, is to design our systems and procedures in ways that challenge and empower students to learn while providing the appropriate degree and elements of support. In terms of information system design, this would mean front-loading support with easy-to-use tools and directly accessible resources (backed up by personal assistance) while encouraging students to take an active and self-responsible role in their own educational endeavors.

Summary

This all comes down to a relatively simple proposition:

<u>If you want to help students succeed, you must involve them in active, personal, and meaningful learning that appropriately supports their development within an inclusive, collegial, and empowering educational community.</u>

This basic principle has been noted by a number of College reports and has implications for all aspects of College operation; but our present focus is information technology tools for students. Although technology often limits traditionally personal aspects of learning, it also has the power to personalize students' experience of the College, engaging them and empowering them as never before.

The primary elements of *Connections* were designed to try to take advantage of these possibilities, guided by a variety of other design considerations, described in the following section.

FLORIDA COMMUNITY COLLEGE at Jacksonville
ARTEMIS

Connections Student Portal

Design Considerations

The design of a student portal requires a template of other general principles to guide its formulation. The following principles are submitted for discussion and review.

Student Factors

- Student Success
  The design of every element of the portal should support the retention and developmental balance factors identified as critical to student success.

- Front-Loaded Resources
  The tools we develop should facilitate a substantial degree of support for new students during their first term at the College. It is during this time that they are formulating and testing goals, and making crucial decision about the place of education in their future.

- High Personalization
  Another obvious goal-basic to the design of any portal-is to provide highly personalized data and customized interface for individual students. Wherever possible, generic information should be replaced with targeted and personalized information relevant to individual student needs and interests.

- Empowerment
  Students should be empowered and encouraged to learn to use College processes on their own. The advisor who registers students--rather than teaching them to use *Artemis* to register themselves--creates unnecessary dependency. Likewise, an information system that unnecessarily requires an intermediary to access and manipulate information disempowers students.

- Computer Literacy
  We must recognize that some of our students will require additional computer skills before they can take full advantage of portal resources. We should encourage students to fully utilize resources such as the LIS computer literacy courses and workshops to address this need.

- Appropriate Applications
  Just because something can be done through technology is not a sufficient reason for doing so. We must always ask whether the use of technology actually enhances student development and success. If we cannot answer this question in the affirmative, we should not undertake such use. Personal counseling is one example of a service that is degraded in quality by the attempts to "cyberize" it.

Marketing Factors

- Marketing Involvement
  The college's Marketing department should be involved in every aspect of the planning, design, and presentation of the portal system.

- Branding
  Involvement of the Marketing department will ensure a high quality, alluring, theme-based identity, common look-and-feel, and professional-level graphic design for all *Connections* components. A well-planned promotional campaign will be critical to success.

- System Designation
  The use of "Connections" (or a similar term) as the *Artemis* portal designation describes the purpose of the system-to provide a virtual *and* personal *connection* between students and College resources. It also acknowledges the centrality of such connections to student retention and success. As such it will be more meaningful to students and staff alike. The associated marketing theme might be something like: "Are you *Connected*?" or "It helps to have *Connections*."

Integration Factors

- Portal Initiation
  The system's functions should initiate students from the very beginning of their enrollment experience, integrating all the various, now discrete, elements of the admissions experience. The admissions process should be restructured to provide a *Connections* tour and "start-up," early in the process. Wherever possible, a data stream should be created that eliminates multiple input requirements, encourages common data views, and minimizes or eliminates paper trail requirements.

- Course Management Integration
  The currently implemented course management systems (i.e., Blackboard and Web CT) need to be expanded beyond distance learning courses, at least in terms of a defined core of information available online for all courses. It is recommended that the College decide on a single platform, best suited to faculty and student needs, and-importantly--supportive of portal integration. Access to this systems should be through the *Connections* portal.

- Data-Sharing Potentials
  Faculty, counseling, advising, and other service staff should have access to non-private information that assists them in their role of helping the student. Whenever possible, data should be integrated to eliminate information silos. A database element of the system should keep statistics on usage and compile student feedback for regular review.

Programming Factors

- E-Systems Involvement
  The E-Systems team is responsible for the portal development that has already been achieved at the College. As a College resource, this team is the linchpin between the content development and the reality of a best-practice Web portal. The team should be involved in every stage of the planning, development and implementation.

- User Interface
  In the design of the *Connections* interface, it is recommended that the following factors be given priority:
  - Ease of use
  - Intuitive navigation
  - Visual clarity and appeal
  - Modular structure
  - Ease of customization by students
  - Proper balance between minimal page layering and visual simplicity
  - Extensive online help functions

- Ease of Maintenance
  The system should be programmed in a way that minimizes maintenance effort, ensures continuity of effort (e.g., thorough documentation), empowers content providers to easily update information, and allows for easy and continual upgrading of features and performance.

- High Functionality
  One goal in all areas would be to develop as much functional/transactional ability as possible on the website (e.g., online form submission of every kind, online academic planning, degree audit access).

- Bandwidth
  Most of our students would access the portal through dial-up connections. Because of this, care should be taken to minimize page load times. Audio and video options and supplements should be provided to those with high-speed access capability, such as that provided on campus and through cable-modem and DSL connections.

Project Management Factors

- Collaboration
  The development of a student portal will require close collaboration of technical experts, content experts, students, and administrative leadership. It is recommended that everyone involved in this project use group communication and document sharing technology to enhance interaction.

- Content Experts
  Content experts should be formally designated for each major portal component. Their work on the continuous development and ongoing maintenance of *Connections* should become a formally established part of their service to the College.

  Each content expert would select and work with a content team throughout the ongoing development process. The process should also include working with a representative group of students to ensure the relevance and ease of use of the resources being developed.

- Training Resources
  FCCU will work with the content experts and will deliver the training required for all *Connections* functions, as well as playing an ongoing role in the training and certification aspects of the *My Goals* Mentor Center.

- Leadership
  Overall coordination and guidance of the *Connections* project would be provided by a steering committee. This committee might be composed of:

  - AVP of Enrollment Development/Student Success
  - Dean of Virtual College
  - South Campus Dean of Student Success
  - Director of E-Systems Technology
  - Student Success Manager
  - College Webmaster
  - Content experts

Other staff would be involved on an "as needed" basis (e.g., the FCCU director, Marketing staff).

- Phased Implementation
  The type of content development suggested in this proposal will be an ongoing process, spanning years of development. After the content experts determine the content and structure of what is to be included in each *Connections* element, it will be important to work closely with the technical staff to determine which elements of these content areas should be targeted for Phase One design, programming, and implementation. This would provide some kind of minimal but significant functionality for each primary element, to be expanded in the future as resources allow.

- Ongoing Evaluation and Continual Improvement
  Evaluation and feedback capabilities will be built into every element of *Connections*. This information will be used to continually assess and improve the performance of the system.

Once the primary design considerations are established, we are ready to consider the basic structure of the portal itself.

FLORIDA COMMUNITY COLLEGE at Jacksonville
ARTEMIS

Connections Student Portal

Design Overview

After examining a broad range of possible options, the structure suggested below was adopted as a recommended model. This structure provides a limited number of main categories that cover a broad range of system capabilities. It strikes a balance between those models that try to put everything on a single page (often producing information overload) and those with so much layering that it creates navigational problems and undue load-time delays.

The specific contents within each element will change as content experts and their teams fully specify the kinds of services to be made available through *Connections*.

My *Connections*	**My Services**	**My Goals**	**My Learning**	**My Advisor**	**My Community**
Including:	*Including:*	*Including:*	*Including:*	*Including:*	*Including:*
Site tour	Admissions	Goal clarification	Class links	Program of study	Virtual tours
Email	Orientation	*Connections 101*	Professor email	Degree Audit	Maps
Calendar	Testing	Student Handbook	Classmate email	Course planner	FCCJ directory
Bookmarks	Registration	Mentor Center	Class updates	Advising status	Clubs
News alerts	Grades	Career planning	Learning resources	Transfer checklist	Web radio
Info channels	Transcripts	College choice	Learning assistance	Advisor email	TCV online
Opinion poll	Financial aid	Job search	SLS 1103	Pre-major details	Interest groups
Hottest links	Payments	Internships	Distance Learning	Progress report	Event updates
and more!	*and more!*	*and more!*	*and more!*	*and more!*	*and more!*

Connections Student Portal

Portal Elements

The following pages provide outlines of possible portal elements. It should be noted that, within this proposal:

- No serious attempt has been made to provide a visual picture of what the portal will actually look like-this will be part of the interface design that will come later.
- No serious attempt has been made to provide a definitive list of topics to be offered within each element-*this will be determined by the content experts*, working with a team of area-appropriate staff.

The purpose of the portal element outlines is to give you a conceptual idea of what each element will entail. As the project leaders and the content experts delve into the project, the portal's scope, form, and content will go through a series of evolutions. The end result will be immeasurably richer than anything this concept paper can express within a few pages.

There are a few basic principles that should guide what is to be provided as content within these elements. Priority will be given to:

- Personalized information
- Transactional services
- Student (customizable) interests and preferences
- Interactive content that influences student learning and success
- Information not duplicated on the college Website

Each outline of the five primary portal elements will include the following categories:

- Focus (what the element is trying to do)
- Possible Components (the kinds of appropriate content)
- Suggested Content Expert (someone who will take the lead)
- Possible Content Team Members (chosen by the content expert)

NOTE: The Marketing department, E-Systems team, and the FCCU staff will have interaction with all of the various components throughout the process.

FLORIDA COMMUNITY COLLEGE at Jacksonville
ARTEMIS

Connections Student Portal

Element 1: My Connections

This will be the "homepage" of the portal. The function of this page is to provide useful functionality as well as being the delivery point (in the form of "alerts") of the information push tools designed within all the other system elements.

Focus
Provide students with a tour of portal functions and with ongoing information updates relevant to their goals and needs

Possible Elements

***Connections* Basics**

- About *Connections*
- Take a site tour
- Reset my password
- Customize *Connections*
- Help us improve *Connections*

Personal Tools

- Your email
- Your address book
- Your calendar
- Personal information
- Personal bookmarks

***Connections* Alerts**

College and Campus Alerts

Information Channels

- My news
- My weather
- My maps
- My bookmarks

Of Special Interest

- Weekly student opinion poll
- Ten hottest *Connections* links

FAQ and Feedback

- FAQ
- *My Connections* feedback

Suggested Content Expert
Marketing and publications staff member

Possible Content Team Members
Content experts from other portal components

FLORIDA COMMUNITY COLLEGE at Jacksonville
ARTEMIS

Connections Student Portal

Element 2: My Services

Focus

Provide students with an integrated online admissions process and with the capacity for *online transactions* with College support services

Possible Elements

My Services: Part One

My Admission and Orientation

- Getting started in college: My goals (tie-in to CDC)
- My admissions process
  - My admissions application
  - My financial aid status
  - My placement testing (pre-test and preparation, test placement results)
  - Initial orientation (update the online orientation, to include portal tour and start-up)
  - My first-term classes (initial course advising printout as preparation for advising session)
  - Using Artemis to register (interactive tutorial, part of orientation?)
  - My parking permit (print or request?)
  - My student ID (initiate process online?)
- My first day, My first term (exposure to *Connections 101* handbook)

Suggested Content Expert

District director of enrollment services

Possible Content Team Members

Dean of student success
CDC coordinator/counselor
Advisor
Assessment center manager
Enrollment services coordinator

My Services: Part Two

My College Services

- *Artemis* Online registration
  - Search for open classes
  - Add/drop
  - Withdrawal
  - Print your schedule
  - Pay for your classes

- My student records
  - Personal information
  - Program of choice
  - Transcripts
  - Grades
  - Payments
- My financial aid (online FASFA, scholarship application, etc.)
- Assessment resources (online assessment and test score access)
- Order books
- ESL resources (online tutorials)
- disAbled student services (request assistance)
- Student appeals (online instructions and form submission?)

Suggested Content Expert
Student success manager

Possible Content Team Members
Dean of student success
Assessment center manager
Enrollment services coordinator
Staff from other areas affected

FAQ and Feedback

- FAQ
- *My Services* feedback

FLORIDA COMMUNITY COLLEGE at Jacksonville
ARTEMIS

Connections Student Portal

Element 3: My Goals

Focus
Provide students with assistance aimed at goal definition and commitment, career and personal development, and other counseling services

Possible Elements

My Goals: Part One

Connections 101
Research has clearly shown the value of extended orientation programs and resources. Research indicates that students who participate in such programs show increased retention rates, higher GPAs, increased student satisfaction, and a variety of other important outcomes. The brief (initial) orientation we currently offer is designed to help students negotiate the enrollment process and register for classes. It is inadequate to the larger task of facilitating student success.

The *Connections 101* handbook will be a basic resource for new students, delivered online through the *Connections* portal. It will *not* repeat the information in the catalog or available on the FCCJ website, though it may serve to appropriately direct students to these resources. It will be based on (and include) academic content appropriate to college-level study, designed to foster the retention factors we've already identified (i.e., goal clarification, academic and social integration, balance between challenge and support). It will be integrated with printed materials and possibly with a (one credit, mentor-based, hybrid/online, SLS) course.

Mentor Center
This online center will provide resources useful for updating the skills of College staff that volunteer to act as student mentors. Counselors and volunteer teaching faculty will serve as core mentoring staff working to facilitate student development, academic and social integration.

The center will perform a number of functions supporting *Connections 101* and other College programs with a mentoring component (e.g., the NSF grant):

- Dissemination of relevant research
- Collection of useful resources
- Overview of best-practices
- Student expectations and guidelines
- Mentor expectations and guidelines

Two functions of this component will be the responsibility of Florida Community College University (FCCU), in consultation with the content expert for this *Connections* component:

- Training in basic mentoring skills
- Evaluation and certification of mentor status

Of course, *Connections 101* and the Mentor Center will only benefit students who make use of them. There are a number of ways we can promote their use:

- Professional graphic design and a promotional campaign provided by the Marketing department for *Connections 101* and the Mentor Center
- FCCU promotion of its Mentor Center training and certification in its newsletters and other materials
- Weekly alerts to first-term students (through the *My Connections* element) highlighting *Connections 101* lessons
- Awarding one college credit to students passing an objective exam (CBE) based on the academic content of the handbook
- Designing a (one credit) course that would use *Connections 101* content, using the mentoring process.

Both of these goals components will involve the identification of resources and their electronic availability. Because of this, a librarian with online resource development and document permission skills will be a member of the content team.

<u>Suggested Content Expert</u>
Counselor

<u>Possible Content Team Members</u>
Other counselors and faculty
Dean of student success
FCCU staff member
Librarian
Marketing and publications staff member (graphic designer/copywriter)

My Goals: Part Two

A task force has been working of redesign of the Career Development Centers (CDCs). This proposal, not yet informed by the results of these deliberations, offers some suggestions concerning the CDCs' role within the *Connections* system. The content expert for this component will mesh these ideas with those already discussed in the redesign effort, suggesting a synthesis to the steering committee.

Virtual Career Center
Career planning is critical to goal clarification and commitment. It is recommended that the College have a collegewide Virtual Career Center (VCC). The VCC website would provide guidance in the form of a *systematic process* of career development and employment services using online resources, some of which have already been developed by individual campuses.

Primary components might include:

- Goal clarification (available as part of the admissions and orientation process)
- Occupational exploration and decision-making
    - SIGI Plus and e-CHOICES (available on FACTS.org)
    - Reality testing
- Educational exploration
    - College database
    - FCCJ program information
- Employment resources and opportunities (see Monster.com as a model and investigate possible linkages)
    - Online job searching
    - Internship opportunities
    - Employability skills
    - Resume posting
    - Electronic portfolio

Links would be provided to campus CDC sites, which would only provide (using a consistent format) unique campus and program information.

Goal Clarification
The admissions and orientation process will be redesigned to better identify those students who have unclear career and educational goals. The VCC will provide online resources that counselors can use to help such students clarify their program selection and identify resources (e.g., SLS classes) that can subsequently assist them with career and educational exploration. Campus CDCs will support this function.

SLS 1301 Revitalization
The content expert chosen for this component (and his or her chosen team) might also help with revitalizing the SLS 1301 career planning class. This could include consideration of a "hybrid" class that combines on-campus instruction with online assignments and resources.

Suggested Content Expert
CDC coordinator

Possible Content Team Members
Other CDC coordinators/counselors
Dean of student success
Other counselors
A.S. program advisors
Employment specialist
A.S. and Workforce program managers

FAQ and Feedback

- FAQ
- My *Goals* feedback

FLORIDA COMMUNITY COLLEGE at Jacksonville
ARTEMIS

Connections Student Portal

Element 4: My Learning

Focus

Provide personalized access to course-related resources, learning resources, and learning assistance

Possible Components

My Learning: Part One

My Classes

This component would be formulated by integrating the information from the College's course management system(s) (CMS) with *Connections*. This component of the *My Learning* element would provide a display of students' current classes, with capabilities such as:

- Course demo or preview
- Email link to professor
- Email links to classmates
- Online syllabus
- Access to assignment status and grades
- Class updates
- Online class learning resources
- Student feedback

As part of this project, the content expert would seek to increase the scope of the CMS, to include a core of information from every class offered at FCCJ (a long-term goal). In the shorter term--working closely with faculty--a basic core of information to be available online for all classes would be identified. A process to accomplish this will be formulated as well.

The training resources required for this transition already exist to some extent. A review of the training and its applicability to the goals of this element of *Connections* will indicate what, if any, modifications must be made.

Some institutions have been able to link student ID photos with their course management systems, providing professors with photos of the students in their classes-one way to promote increased academic and social integration. It will also be important to assure that the CMS system "talks" to the retention management system to be developed (see *My Progress* component in next section).

Suggested Content Expert
Dean of virtual college

ible Content Team Members
Faculty
Other academic dean(s)
Workforce deans(s)
Librarian
LSC staff member

My Learning: Part Two

My Learning Resources (LRC)
- (customized resource list)

My Learning Assistance Center (LAC)
- (customized resource list, including resources like *Smart Thinking* online tutoring)

Study Skills Resources
- Student Success WebWorkshops
- SLS 1103

Distance Learning (DL) Resources
- Learner Support Center
- DL handbook
- Blackboard

Suggested Content Expert
Librarian or LAC coordinator

Possible Content Team Members
LRC and LAC staff
LSC staff member
Distance Learning staff member
SLS 1003 professor(s)
Counselor(s)
DisAbled student services specialist
Dean of student success

FAQ and Feedback
- FAQ
- *My Learning* feedback

FLORIDA COMMUNITY COLLEGE at Jacksonville
ARTEMIS

Connections Student Portal

Element 5: My Advisor _____

Focus
Provides online access to key academic planning and retention management resources

Possible Elements

My Advisor: Part One

Basic Resources

- Artemis Online Registration
- Academic Calendar
- Program Choices
  - My program of study
  - My major
  - Explore other programs or majors

Advising Tools

- My program advisor
- My advising status checklist (benchmarks)
- My Degree Audit (with instructional guide)

[NOTE: Only one of the next three components would appear, based on the student's POS.]

A.A. Transfer Planning Tools

- My pre-major advising sheet (for most common majors)
- My transfer checklist
- University transfer resource links (transfer manuals, articulation offices)
- My course planner (interactive scheduling and program-specific class selection)

A.S, A.A.S., Certificate, and Workforce Program Planning Tools

- My program summary sheet
- My course planner

Adult Studies Program Planning Tools

- My program summary sheet
- My course planner

Suggested Content Expert
Counselor coordinator

Possible Content Team Members
Dean of student success
Academic advisor and A.S. program advisor
Adult studies advisor and/or coordinator
Workforce dean
Marketing staff member

My Advisor: Part Two

My Progress
This component would provide a student-centered interface for a retention management system. Such a system would provide for capabilities such as:

- Identification of attrition risk factors and progression benchmarks
- Assessment of risk factors
- Intervention initiation capabilities
- Integration with the course management system
- Retention-related data collection and reporting

Information would be formatted for student use. Benchmarks would be established to determine student progress and students would get indications of trouble areas (e.g., displaying "red flag" messages when grade point trended lower, when an "AW" grade was posted, etc.). This information should also be available for use by intervention agents (counselors, advisors, LAC staff, etc.).

Conversely, students would receive positive reinforcement for achievements (e.g., displaying "green light" messages when GPA improved, when a certain number of credits had been earned with a good GPA, when increased involvement in *My Community* was "sensed" by the system).

After researching commercial products, the College has made the decision to develop its own system. This will require significant research to determine the priority components and relevant functions of the *My Progress* component.

Suggested Content Expert
Dean of student success

Possible Content Team Members
Director of institutional research
Counselor(s)
Advisor(s)
Academic advisor(s)
Teaching faculty
Assessment center manager
LAC staff member

FAQ and Feedback

- FAQ
- *My Advisor* feedback

FLORIDA COMMUNITY COLLEGE at Jacksonville
ARTEMIS

Connections Student Portal

Element 6: My Community

The importance of integrating students into the community of learning is a thread that runs throughout this proposal. Because of the importance of this principle, it is suggested that the role and function of the coordinators of student activities be expanded and upgraded. As *coordinators of campus community* (or a similar title change), these upgraded staff would be responsible for overall community-building efforts at the College.

It is also suggested that the College consider hiring such a position for the Distance Learning program. This person would be responsible for *virtual* community-building programs for that program and for the College as a whole.

Focus

Provide a mechanism to facilitate student involvement and a sense of community, on campus and virtually

Possible Elements

Campus Basics

- Campus map and virtual tour
- Who's Who on campus (with photos and email links)
- Campus directory

What's Happening?

- FCCJ Artist Series
- Student clubs
- SGA updates
- The Campus Voice
- FCCJ Web Radio
- College cable TV programming

Virtual Communities

- Student Interest Groups (SIGs)
    - Freshman
    - College Prep
    - Mature students
    - Undecided students
    - Community service

    - Foreign students
    - Honors Academy
    - Student leadership
    - Honors academy
    - Pre-Med
    - Pre-Law
- Bulletin Boards
- Online programming and resources

FAQ and Feedback

- FAQ
- *My Community* feedback

Suggested Content Expert
Coordinator of student activities

Suggested Content Team
Other coordinators of student activities
Distance learning representative
Dean of student success
Marketing staff
SGA president or officers

Connections Student Portal

Issues and Concerns

Some issues need to be addressed before a decision is made to progress with the portal project.

Infrastructure and Project Feasibility
This project will enhance *Artemis* by further customizing the interface based on students' academic, guidance, and career development characteristics--components already generally identified by the E-Systems team for future development.

After being presented with a brief overview of the proposal, the Director of E-Systems Technology indicated the technical feasibility of the project, given the constraints of other competing College priorities. Due to his planning and foresight, issues related to storage capacity, software environment, and content management are either resolved or in the process of being resolved.

If not already or recently done, it is recommended that a thorough review of commercial portal products be conducted by the E-Systems team to determine capabilities, cost, flexibility, data integration features, and potential to accelerate development (see http://faculty.weber.edu/deisler/areweready.htm for a list of portal vendors).

Staff Commitment and Organizational Support
The allocation of staff time to the *Connections* project will be an issue that will involve balancing the various priorities of the staff involved. The E-Systems team has many ongoing projects, and the steering committee and content team members have other full-time responsibilities. Content experts will require substantial time to orchestrate the content development and planning required. The Marketing department's involvement will stretch their limited resources.

Valencia Community College, a model for this proposal, released 25 staff members for two years to conduct the development and implementation of their *Atlas* portal. The result is a world-class product. Can we assume FCCJ would want anything less than that?

The College has taken some steps toward organizing itself to support technology initiatives. The FCCU team provides a significant training resource. The formation of the E-Systems team and the College Webmaster function provided resources required to accomplish what has already been realized. Significant funds have been spent to provide the required hardware and software infrastructure. These resources may need to be expanded as the role and function of IT resources continues to expand.

There is no comparable organizational staff support for *content and program* development. A dynamic student portal is *driven by content* and requires a major commitment of staff resources. If the College intends to boldly move toward providing a student portal of the scope proposed, it must structure its organization to support this function.

Staff with major *Connections* responsibilities should have their job duties adjusted to reflect this *ongoing* assignment priority. This would include content experts for the following *Connections* components:

Element	Component	Content Expert
My Connections	All components	Marketing staff member
My Services	Part One	District director of ES
	Part Two	Student success manager
My Goals	Part One	Counselor
	Part Two	CDC coordinator
My Learning	Part One	Dean of virtual college
	Part Two	Librarian or LAC coordinator
My Advisor	Part One	Counselor coordinator
	Part Two	Dean of student success
My Community	All components	Coordinator of student activities

Other members of the steering committee should also receive consideration for the significant commitment this project would entail.

The time commitment required of content experts will vary over time. During intense development periods, it may be necessary to release these staff fulltime from other duties. Subsequent to development, duties related to training, troubleshooting, update and maintenance will require substantial time but will likely be less demanding. It could also be that certain components would not be addressed until later phases of development. The AVP of enrollment development/student success, with the assistance of the *Connections* steering committee, will help manage of these kinds of staffing adjustments.

Connections Student Portal

Conclusion

Syllabus, a magazine focusing on the application of technology to education, tells us, "Portals are taking college campuses by storm..." FCCJ now has the opportunity to be on the front edge of this dynamic movement.

Connections is an ambitious project, and the potential payoff for students, staff, and the College is substantial. It's an opportunity to integrate the many student success and information technology initiatives that have often been developed in isolation from each other. It's an opportunity for FCCJ to demonstrate its forward-thinking leadership and its commitment to world-class educational services. It's an opportunity to tailor our resources and our organization to student needs, within a proven context of student success research, theory, and practice.

The way forward is clear. Do we have the vision, courage, and commitment to lead the way?

Connections Student Portal

Appendix A: Implementation Suggestions

There are many ways to accomplish what has been laid out in this proposal. The outline below is not intended as a plan as much as an illustration of the kinds of things that will probably need to be addressed as part of the portal's development and implementation.

Concept Development and Approval

1. Initial meeting to discuss vision (10-29-02)
2. Initial concept research, site visitation, and plan development (12-4-02)
3. Initial review of project proposal (12-12-02)
4. Secondary review of the project proposal (12-16-02 to 1-13-03)
5. Formal commitment from top-level administration

Initial Organization and Planning

6. Determination of initial development requirements, including: E-Systems priority, formation of a steering committee, designation of content experts
7. Selection of team members by content experts
8. Allocation of sufficient staff time for participation and leadership by key staff
9. Content team research, discussion, and formulation of design recommendations,
10. Revision of the *Connections* plan by the steering committee
11. Determination of Phase One (Two, Three...) priorities by steering committee
12. Software and hardware research and recommendations by IT staff

Project Development

13. Determination of timeline for implementation of Phase One (Two, Three...) priorities

14. Detailed content specification for priority elements

15. Determination of organizational and operational requirements

16. Commitment of required resources

Programming

17. Technical specification

18. Initial programming

19. Testing and user review of prototype

20. Additional programming

21. Final testing and review

22. Program documentation

Implementation

23. Preparation of training and marketing materials

24. Training (FCCU)

25. Marketing

26. Plan for maintenance and continued development

27. Pilot Implementation

28. Revision as necessary

29. Full implementation

Recycling to Next Phase

30. Go to step 11 for next phase of development

FLORIDA COMMUNITY COLLEGE
ARTEMIS

Connections Student Portal

Appendix B: Bibliography

Portals

http://www.syllabus.com/article.asp?id=6481
http://Weber.edu/deisler/arewereadv.htm

Student Retention

http://www.csupomona.edu/~irp/annotatedBibli.htm

Student Development

http://www.utdallas.edu/dept/ugraddean/theory.pdf
http://home.ust.hk/~hkssa/re_Bibliography.html
http://www.byu.edu/fc/pages/tchlrnpages/7princip.html

Education and Learning

http://aera-cr.ed.asu.edu/links.html
http://www.stfx.ca/academic/adulted/annotations/Learning_Theory.html

GH121602

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

REPRODUCTION RELEASE

(Specific Document)

I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title: Connections: A Comprehensive Student Portal - Concept Paper and Proposal	
Author(s): Gary Lynn Harr, Ph.D.	
Corporate Source:	Publication Date: 12-16-02

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, *Resources in Education* (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following three options and sign at the bottom of the page.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

Level 1

☑

Check here for Level 1 release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic) and paper copy.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2A documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2A

Level 2A

☐

Check here for Level 2A release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche and in electronic media for ERIC archival collection subscribers only

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2B documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2B

Level 2B

☐

Check here for Level 2B release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche only

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits.
If permission to reproduce is granted, but no box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries.

Signature: [signature]	Printed Name/Position/Title: Gary Harr, Counselor
Organization/Address: Florida Community College at Jacksonville 11901 Beach Blvd. Jacksonville, FL 32246	Telephone: 904-646-2122 FAX: E-Mail Address: gharr@fccj.edu Date: 1-3-03

III. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY INFORMATION (FROM NON-ERIC SOURCE):

If permission to reproduce is not granted to ERIC, or, if you wish ERIC to cite the availability of the document from another source, please provide the following information regarding the availability of the document. (ERIC will not announce a document unless it is publicly available, and a dependable source can be specified. Contributors should also be aware that ERIC selection criteria are significantly more stringent for documents that cannot be made available through EDRS.)

Publisher/Distributor:
Address:
Price:

IV. REFERRAL OF ERIC TO COPYRIGHT/REPRODUCTION RIGHTS HOLDER:

If the right to grant this reproduction release is held by someone other than the addressee, please provide the appropriate name and address:

Name:
Address:

V. WHERE TO SEND THIS FORM:

Send this form to the following ERIC Clearinghouse:

However, if solicited by the ERIC Facility, or if making an unsolicited contribution to ERIC, return this form (and the document being contributed) to:

ERIC Processing and Reference Facility
4483-A Forbes Boulevard
Lanham, Maryland 20706

Telephone: 301-552-4200
Toll Free: 800-799-3742
FAX: 301-552-4700
e-mail: ericfac@inet.ed.gov
WWW: http://ericfacility.org